

CHAPTER:

Respect in the Classroom

Professionalism in the Classroom

Part of being a respectful teacher is to have a sense of professionalism. According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, Professionalism is: “the skill, good judgment, and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well.” In the case of a school, teachers are hired to be professionals. Being Professional is the first step to creating strong, respectful relationships with students. One example of treating students professionally is to know how to treat them fairly.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAIR AND EQUAL

Fair does not mean equal. Richard Curwin does a wonderful job explaining the difference in his article on Edutopia “Fair Isn’t Equal: Seven Classroom tips.” The first step to knowing the difference is to know that treating students fairly is not treating them the same. According to Curwin, students say fairness is one of the top qualities they like in a teacher. While many think treating students the same is treating them fairly, Curwin argues otherwise. Curwin states in his article: “students are not the same. They have different motivations for their choices, different needs, different causes for misbehavior and different goals.”

The current model in schools for punishing misbehaving students is called the Progressive Consequence Organization (PCO). Curwin calls this the “most glaring example of the misunderstanding between fair and equal.” When a student misbehaves, the consequence he gets for his misbehavior is the same as the next student who misbehaves. If a student gets a second infraction, the consequence is worse than the first time, but still the same as any other student who gets a second infraction. The sequence continues and never changes. This is common practice in many school and it is actually a dangerous practice for a school to have. Curwin gives the example of two student who don’t do their homework, one because he has to

help at the family business after school, and the other because he was watching TV. Under PCO, both students get the same punishment, while this is equal, ask yourself, is this really fair?

TEACHING FAIRLY NOT EQUALLY

The first step of teaching fairly is to make sure everyone follows the same rules in the classroom. If there is an unusual circumstance, exceptions can be made, but positive interactions have to be the same for every student. The second step is to have flexible consequences. This means when a student breaks the rules, the teacher doesn't give every student the same punishment, but instead chooses a consequence from a large cloud of consequences. Curwin says in his article that this works best if the teacher has the consequences spelled out for students, administrators, and parents. The consequences should not have a defined order or progression when looked at or the fair piece of this is lost. When giving out the punishment, the teacher merely needs to look into her cloud and pick the consequence that best fits the infraction or that will be most effective given what you know of the misbehaving student. A good idea Curwin talks about is giving the student the choice. As long as the student knows that his or her behavior has to improve if the teacher is going to give him or her the choice. Another option is to allow the student choose, but if that student doesn't improve, the next time they won't get to choose.

The problem with progressive consequences is that the amount of times a student is run through the progression is completely dependent on which students are caught and how the consequence is delivered. One way Curwin talks about helping to implement fairness into the classroom is to teach the students that fair isn't equal before implementing a fair policy. Curwin suggests using homework, discussion or an in-class activity to do this. Get students involved by asking them to bring examples from home or in the community where it is okay to treat people differently. This will help students understand the premise behind Fair isn't Equal. Another way a teacher could do this is by making it clear to his or her students how he or she will be fair, but not equal. As long as the concept is explained to match the capabilities of your students, any age group should be able to understand the concept.

One thing about being fair over being equal is that it requires more work to get it implemented than just treating everyone the same. This is not an easy system to start up. However, according to Curwin, in the long run, it will save teachers time and be far more

effective. Curwin's closing statement is truly wonderful: "When it comes to everyone the same, every child deserves a lot better than that." If, as a teacher, you can treat your students fairly, you are being professional and respecting your student's differences.

UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: THE PHASES OF EXPLOITATION

One unfortunate thing about professionalism is that there are always those who will conduct themselves in a way that is very unprofessional. An extreme case of this is teachers who exploit students who may not be in the best head space. These teachers include both sexual offenders and non-sexual offenders. In the following section, I am going to introduce the phases of exploitation as written about by the Utah Practices Advisory Commission which I will refer to as UPAC in the future.

PHASE 1: CASTING THE ROLLS

In the first phase, when the offender is looking for schools, he or she looks for schools with policies on sexual misconduct that are very loose. If the school has a low understanding of sexual abuse, even better. School with rapid turnover of principals just sweetens the deal. The last thing they look for is inconsistency in policy enforcement.

The next place the offender looks once the school is found, is the parents of the students. The best parents for an offender to look for are those who need assistance or are struggling in parenting. Single parents are good and parents having marital problems, even better. Even parents with multiple children are targets, especially those facing the loss of a job. Basically, any parents with emotional and time consuming concerns are targeted because their children are going to be open and vulnerable.

This brings us to the big piece of this gross, unprofessional behavior. The students these offenders usually look for are those that are emotionally vulnerable, open to someone trying to fill the void. These students are those with the parents having troubles and don't ever seem to have the time for their son or daughter.

PHASE 2: SETTING THE STAGE

In the second phase, the offender is beginning to get everything organized. In the school, he or she is becoming a very personable and well-liked teacher. If he or she seems like they can do no wrong, it will be harder for people to believe he or she truly did anything wrong. If they are well liked and well respected, it also makes it just that much easier for others to write off less than professional behavior. The example UPAC give is the excuse “That’s just my style, I hug everyone.”

In this phase, with the parents and families, he or she is becoming more helpful, coming around and doing what he or she can for the family. This allow him or her better access to the student outside of school while helping alleviate any concerns the parents might have. They won’t think twice about their son or daughter spending extra time with this teacher who has done nothing, but been kind to them.

This brings us once again to the students. There are two ways the offender can make the student feel special, one is non-sexual and the other is sexual, both ways have multiple things the offender does to get closer to the student. Non-sexually, the offender just talks to the student, telling him or her about their personal issues or getting the student to talk about his or her personal problems. Also asking students to run personal errands or sending personal texts or gifts. A big one here is just giving the student his or her personal phone number or email. If the offender is makes the student feel special sexually, some things he or she might be doing is asking students about romantic relationships or sexual activity. Any excessive touching or flirtatious touching is also a sign.

PHASE 3: SHOWTIME

When the offender is at the point when he is ready to take action, he or she will become more aggressive at school in defending his or her behavior. He or she even goes as far to suggest he or she cares more about the student than anyone else in the school system. He or she also starts assuming more support from the family while simultaneously isolating the student from his or her parents. When talking to the student he or she bribes, threatens, intimidates or coerces the student with quotes, taken from UPAC, like “If you tell, it will cost me the job I love” or “If you tell, no one will believe you.”

PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

Now that we've looked at one model of professional teaching followed by the exact opposite of professionalism in teaching, we have the guidelines UPAC wrote, using the red light-green light line of thinking. The first set of guidelines are labeled the Red light guidelines. These are the things you should never do as a teacher if you want to be professional.

RED LIGHT GUIDELINES

The following list includes UPAC's Red Light guidelines for Professional teaching. These guidelines are risky behaviors that professional teachers do not engage in with student.

- Frequently touching students
- Making comments about a student's body
- Being alone with a student in a locked/closed room or private vehicle
- Talking about a student's sexuality
- Allowing students to sit on your lap
- Flirting with a student in anyway
- Tickling, wrestling, poking, patting, punching or spanking students even in fun

YELLOW LIGHT GUIDELINES

UPAC's Yellow Light Guidelines are those actions that are borderline unprofessional. You shouldn't do these actions as a teacher, but they aren't nearly as bad as the Red Light Guidelines.

- Signaling out students for favors
- Overly personal cards, note, emails, texts or yearbook inscriptions
- Teasing that references gender or includes sexual innuendos
- Sending texts/emails to a single student for any reason
 - Not including sending missed notes or answering a question

GREEN LIGHT GUIDELINES

The Green Light Guidelines are the Guidelines for all professional teachers. These Guidelines are suggestions of how to be respectful to students as well as keeping your professional distance.

- Make humorous and friendly comments
- Give compliments that are not overly personal
- Offer assistance to students
- Talk to all students the same way
- Keep the door open when alone with a student
- Treat all your students the same
- Don't spend more time with one student or one group of students than another
 - Slightly different for club advisors
- If you touch a student, keep the manner consistent to all students
 - Safe areas: head, shoulders, upper back, arms and hands
- Make instructional sites open to students *and* parents
- Keep relationships with students to the school
 - No social networking with students or parents until they graduate

Professionalism in the classroom is a big importance. Professionalism does not mean a teacher has to sacrifice kindness or warmth. A teacher can be professional and respected by his or her students as long as they treat students fairly and keep that professional distance that keeps the relationship in the school.

Appreciation for the Classroom

When walking into Mr. Bruce Gasiewski's classroom at East Hampton High School in East Hampton, Connecticut, everyone can notice his number one rule: "Respect Everybody Every day." For teachers, respect is the most well intended gesture a teacher can show to his or her students and vice versa. Teachers not only should respect their students, but students should, in return, respect their teacher. In order for teachers to establish respect as their number one goal in the classroom, there are multiple methods and areas where teachers can strengthen and reinforce that expectation.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

For all educators, an important classroom management tool that upholds respect is classroom expectations. This respect can be established during the first week of school when teachers and students collaboratively work together on instituting classroom rules and goals. For all students and teachers, it is important to establish rules and boundaries within the classroom. It is especially significant in having the students and teachers work together to produce an honest list of classroom rules. Two expectations that are vital to the classroom setting include respecting each other and classroom procedures.

RESPECTING EACH OTHER

It is important that students and teachers exhibit mutual respect to each other. Classroom expectations that resemble respect include respect for one's livelihood, respect for school property, and respect for each other's property. Examples of classroom expectations that demonstrate mutual respect from the teachers and the students include Professor John Wilkins of Ohio State University and his [list](#) of expectations and Vanderbilt University's [compact](#) between learners and teachers. Both classroom expectation settlements include respecting each other's diversity, technology, and the classroom environment. Determining essential standards for both the teachers and the students produce a respectful and manageable classroom (Wilkins, 1995), (Vanderbilt University, 2014).

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

An additional idea that should be established is classroom procedures. It is important that students and teachers equally understand the procedures within the classroom. Promoting a safe classroom is one of many important measures that teachers can incorporate in a classroom setting. Teachers can have a safe classroom by ensuring appropriate communication and humor between the teacher and students. Through safe communication and humor, teachers can encourage student participation. With harmless communication and humor, students will feel safer and encouraged to participate more without fear of being judged for their responses (Cohen, Cardillo, & Pickeral, 2011).

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

The foundation of respect starts with a strong teacher and student relationship. Mr. Bruce Gasiewski and Mrs. Sherry Banack, two mathematics educators at East Hampton High School, emphasize the importance of teacher-student relationships. Both agree that teachers should take the time to build strong teacher-student relationships by investing personal time getting to know their students, the student's expectations, and learning styles. Mrs. Banack explains the scenario that if a student concentrates more when completing classwork or homework by listening to music, then teachers should allow that student to listen to music.

David Johnson, author of Making Minutes Count Even More, demonstrates interest in students understanding the material. He shows interest by not simply giving up and failing students, but instead prompting students to take the time to understand and learn the subject. Once students know their teacher desires for them to do their best to succeed and understand the course content while in the classroom, the students will begin to cherish and accept the teacher's consideration for the class (Johnson, 1986).

Building Relationships with Students

Building strong, respectful relationships with students is key to running a smooth classroom. If your students don't respect you, they are never going to listen to you. There are a few tools in this chapter from Patricia Williams Managing Secondary Classrooms. These tools include, supportive language, polite language, Inclusive language, I-messages versus You-messages and Listening.

SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE

A tool some teachers use to get class discussions going without making anyone feel ridiculed or embarrassed is called supportive language. Now class discussions, as many people know, can be very difficult to facilitate and get started. Supportive language is a tool that can help start up a discussion without making anyone feel stupid. Supportive Language is used when you, the teacher, calls upon one of your students and only get a partial answer. Instead of putting your student down by saying things like: "That's good, but how else can..." use supportive language and start with another student. The example Williams gives is about a boy named Marvin

(Not verbatim; summary) Marvin is in social studies learning about the separation of power at the federal level. The teacher asks the students to define the term, and calls on Marvin who only gives a partial definition. The teacher then uses supportive language and says: "Marvin has given us a good start on the definition of the concept, separation of powers. Jean, can you add other points that help define the concept?"

Using this type of language, Marvin doesn't feel stupid. The teacher gave Marvin appreciation for the work he did and moved to another student who might elaborate. Through supportive language, Marvin is likely to feel encouraged by what he was able to do and want to contribute to either this conversation or another class discussion. Marvin was not put down, embarrassed, ridiculed or told he was wrong in this way. The most important part about this, supportive language moves the discussion along and allows the students to explore the content and follow-

up points further. Supportive language, while a wonderful tool, is also a respectful tool for teachers to use when communicating with students.

POLITE LANGUAGE

Williams notes that it is common for teachers to use directives with student or more clearly, commands in the form of questions. For example, when a teacher wants a student to close the door, he or she asks “Mary, would you please close the door?” Mary understands this as an unspoken command, even though it is in the form of a question. When Mary sits back down, the teacher makes sure to thank her.

The key piece of this directive is that the teacher uses “Please” and “Thank you.” These terms are simple use, but very rare to see in a classroom. Williams suggests that when a teacher doesn’t use polite language (please and thank you) he or she comes across as a pet rather than a student. Using polite language in the classroom everyday can produce wonders by showing the students you respect and appreciate them and their help.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

According to Dictionary.com, inclusive language is “language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people. Esp. gender-specific words, such as “man”, “mankind”, and masculine pronouns, the use of which might be considered to exclude women.” As a teacher, this does not mean you walk into a classroom and claim ownership. Williams uses the example: “In my classroom I expect you to...” This indicates that the teacher is assuming responsibility of the classroom and the students. When you do this, you are telling the students that the class’s problems are your problems instead of the entire class’s problems.

The alternative to teachers assuming responsibility for the class is by using Inclusive language. Williams’s example is “In this class, *we*...” to show the teacher including the students in responsibility of the class. This also shows the students that their teacher sees them, in a way, as equals in the classroom and not subordinates. Through inclusive language the teachers and the

students share classroom responsibility and that solutions to problems are found by the entire class and not just the teacher.

I-MESSAGE VERSUS YOU-LANGUAGE

YOU-MESSAGE

One of the first thing Williams does in her section of I-message versus You-message is point out that as a teacher, it is common to respond to a student's inappropriate behavior as well as tempting to point out the responsible student in order to confront them. Also common in this situation is for teachers to resort to put downs, which almost always starts with "You."

Williams lists six categories with examples that put downs fit into. The categories and examples are:

- Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, and blaming: *"You're always picking on someone in this class."*
- Name-calling, stereotyping, ridicule: *"You're acting childish today."*
- Interpreting, analyzing, and diagnosing: *"You always seem to need attention."*
- Praising, agreeing, giving positive evaluation: *"When you work hard, you're a good student"*
- Reassuring, sympathizing, supporting: *"I know you got home late last night because of the game and didn't have time to do your homework"*
- Probing, questioning, and interrogating: *"How do you expect to pass this course when you're absent all the time?"*

All six of these categories and messages have a negative message, even the ones that seem positive, because they have, in one way or another, some sort of put down. In all of the above cases, the teacher is making some sort of negative remark to the student. Also, all the statements start with "You."

Sometimes, however the "You" is implied and not stated directly to the student, which is still just as harmful. The example Williams uses is the students are having a hard time concentrating on a hot day. The teacher tell the students: "I know it's hard to concentrate on a hot day like today." This is still a put down, because while this does not seem like the teacher is

blaming the student, what the student hears is: “You’re not concentrating like you should.” The “You” was not stated in the teacher’s statement, but the student still heard it.

I-MESSAGE

Instead of using “You-Messages,” the alternative is the “I-Messages.” When a teacher uses “I-messages,” that teacher is taking control of her emotional discomfort over a situation. It is difficult to learn to use “I-messages” because what you say has to be sent with nonjudgmental descriptions of acceptable behavior. Williams’s example is:

- Don’t say: *“Don’t interrupt while I’m giving directions.”*
- Do say: *“When I’m interrupted while I’m giving directions, I have a difficult time making the directions clear and I become very frustrated.”*

Williams talks about three components to good “I-messages” using her example. The first is that the message starts with “When.” In the example above, this is shown with *“When I’m interrupted while I’m giving directions.”* This component tells the student you are speaking to what exactly is bothering you. The second component tells the student why you are frustrated or annoyed by their actions because it pinpoints the effects of the student’s actions. In the example above, this is shown with: *“I have a difficult time making the directions clear.”* The last component is when you state your feeling which allows your students to know how their actions are making you feel. In the example above, this is shown with: *“I become very frustrated.”*

“I-messages” are a very effective tool in a respectful and smooth running classroom. The first reason for this is because “I-messages” over “You-messages” have a better chance of increasing a student’s willingness to change their misbehavior. This is because the student is not feeling attacked, you are being open with the student about your feelings and the student never feels a need to get defensive because you are talking about how his or her actions make you feel and not how his actions make him or her a bad person. “I-messages” also contain minimal negative judgment because they place the feelings of the situation where they really are, on you the teacher. Finally, the “I-message” unlike the “You-message” doesn’t hurt the relationship you may have already built with your students because you are not putting them down.

LISTENING

Williams talks about how an important part of building strong, respectful relationships with students is to listen to students. The primary goal of listening is to let the student express any concerns they have, or any needs or wants they have. If you want to have and establish a good conversation with a student, you, as a teacher, need to listen to what they are saying. Often when a student is talking to a teacher, all they are asking for is clarification or permission to do something, but this is not always the case. Sometimes when a student approaches you, the message the student is conveying is hiding their emotions or concerns. Hidden messages may include:

- an expression of their emotions
- confusion about their life
- frustration over an assignment

A student will usually cover these hidden messages up with angry outbursts. For example: “This class is stupid!” or “You’re stupid!” To find out what the hidden message the student is displaying, the technique you have to use needs to be empathetic and non-evaluative. An example of this is paraphrasing or active listening.

PARAPHRASING AND ACTIVE LISTENING

WHAT IS PARAPHRASING?

Paraphrasing means restating what the student said to check your understanding and making sure you heard right as well as letting the student know you are listening. By paraphrasing, you are allowing the student to correct what you heard and helps you and student clean up misconceptions. Paraphrasing also helps keep you focused on the student when there is a lot going on as well as helps the student to better work through their thoughts and emotions (Unit 2.).

Paraphrasing is really important to Active Listening. It allows people to feel heard, which is always appreciated. As stated earlier, it really helps to clear up and prevent misconceptions about what the student is saying. If there are any false accusation, errors or misinterpretations in what you hear, the student can easily fix them. It is also a lot harder to fall into traps that block

your listening such as the temptations to judge or interrupt because you are focusing on understanding what is going through the student's head (Unit 2.)

PARAPHRASING IN THE CLASSROOM

Williams discusses several benefits to using paraphrasing in the classroom. When you paraphrase and use active language, students learn that their feelings are accepted. This helps relieve any tension or anxiety building up in the student while they are trying to hide their feelings. The student also feels more accepted and reduces the inappropriate and unproductive actions brought on by frustration. As a teacher, if you can paraphrase correctly, you have the chance to help a student clarify his or her feelings.

Part of good listening skills is doing more than just listening. As a teacher, you have to not only hear what your students is telling you, but you also have to accept the student's feelings for what they are. You need to understand that any anger the student may be displaying is rarely the problem. To help the student work through the issue, you have to want to help and be willing to actively participate in the conversation.

A Common argument Williams notes against paraphrasing and active listening is that teachers are not councilors and that the process takes too long. While this is a valid argument, it is still a very powerful technique because it helps students to work through problems on their own. Through paraphrasing, less class time can be wasted because problems are fixed more quickly. It helps students resolve strong feelings, permitting them to more quickly return to work. Paraphrasing:

- Allows students to realize it is okay to have emotions
- Eases students into the habit of "talking it through" and problem-solving
- Keeps responsibility of the problem on the student
- Student is more willing to listen to teachers
- Teachers more willing to listen to students
- Promotes meaningful relationships between teachers and students

With Paraphrasing, students feel they can turn to teachers when they have feelings that are making it hard for them to work and this makes them more willing to focus in the knowledge and concepts the teacher's trying to teach.

Proper Use of Technology

In our current market today, technology and its use in society has risen over the past decade. Technology has become the center stone for practical uses within organizations, especially education. Technological devices have altered previous classrooms into modernized learning labs. Technology has not only helped establish the classroom setting, but also assisted students in expanding their learning development (What If? 2009). Smartboards, laptops, and online applications such as Khan Academy have broadened the classroom setting into technological scenes where students can expand their knowledge through interaction and utilize more personal learning styles. Although there are ways and examples in which technology can benefit the classroom, it is important that educators understand and teach students to respectfully use technology.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO LEARN

At young ages, students are constantly using technological devices, whether it is cell phones to communicate, watching television for enjoyment, or gathering information by accessing the Internet through a computer. Some technological devices can distract students from focusing on the subjects they are studying. Dennis Adams states that students fall victim to technology's distractions because "if the entertainment doesn't come from the front of the...classroom, it comes from the Internet" (Bugeja, 2007). If students are focused on technological distractions, then students will lose focus on the teacher's presentation of the subject (Bugeja, 2007), (Gulley, 2003). Since students are introduced to numerous technological situations, teachers have to implement technical settings and scenarios into the students' curriculum (Ed.gov, n.a.).

APPLYING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE CLASSROOM

In order for teachers to keep the students engaged with an educational topic, the teacher must technologically educate their classroom in a way that respectfully motivates students to

yearn to learn as well as focus on the content. When it comes to deciding an appropriate technological tool for the classroom, teachers should determine its suitable characteristics.

Characteristics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- It should expand the students' learning styles and creativity
- It is universally applicable to all students
- It allows accessibility to other technological devices (Cassidy, 2013)

A technological device that can assist teachers and their classroom, follow the standards above is a Smartboard. Smartboards are interactive whiteboards that allow teachers and students the option to write, edit, and move text and pictures around. Smartboards allow teachers more breathing room when it comes to presenting their lessons. When set up correctly, it can have access to other applications such as Microsoft Word. Teachers can review their projected lessons and write comments pertaining to the lesson on the Smartboard. After teachers complete the lessons, they can save their work or classwork that students accomplished on the Smartboard. This is useful in case teachers want to show their lessons and students' progress to administrators and parents.

Smartboards are also great devices for allowing students to interrelate with. Scott Miler comments by saying that the Smartboards “open up more opportunities for students to interact with something” (Weber, 2010). Allowing students to interact with the Smartboard enhances and applies their technological learning styles and engagement in the classroom. Having teachers apply technological devices such as Smartboards in the classroom can motivate students to respectfully focus on the content and not abuse technology (Weber, 2010).

APPLYING TECHNOLOGY FOR THE CONTENT

Since students have an earlier perspective of using technology, they are able to apply and reflect further on their educational experience with the use of technology. Instructors can teach students to respectfully use technology towards the content they are learning by instigating technical applications into the students' curriculum. Coincidental with the content, technological exercises promote student motivation and increase student understanding (Ed.gov, n.a.).

For technological applications such as [Khan Academy](https://www.khanacademy.org/), students can watch educational videos on certain mathematical and scientific subjects. Afterwards, they can apply their knowledge from the videos to interactive questionnaires related to the videos. Khan Academy

displays itself as one of many technological applications that allow students to visually learn a subject related to their content in school and apply their learning to educational examples (Khan Academy, 2014).

Not only can students use Khan Academy to their learning advantage, but teachers and parents can also observe their students' progress throughout the lesson if the teachers share their access to the students' account. This option for teachers is beneficial to managing a successful classroom. Khan Academy allows teachers to check their students' understandings through the amount of time a student spends on the website, the amount of questions they answer, and how many questions were answered correctly. This technological application allows teachers to observe and manage students' understandings of a subject and recognizes where certain students excel or struggle within a subject (Khan Academy, 2014). Giving students multiple technological objectives such as Khan Academy promotes student engagement and motivation to learn, which enhances students' respect of the content.

Essentially, students are introduced to different ways of applying enjoyable, beneficial, and educational technology to their lives. As teachers, it is important that we show our students how to properly use and relate technology to their learning styles, school subjects, and lives. Applying technological devices in the classroom such as Smartboards can increase student interaction with technology in the classroom. Applying technological applications towards certain content areas such as Khan Academy can encourage student to strengthen their knowledge within the content area.

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